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ABSTRACT

An instructional plan for kindergarten invclving learning or interest centers is presented. The plan involves the development of stations for individual interest and skill development, including testing of readiness tasks. The teacher must plan the activities for each station. In classsrooms with cnly one teacher, only one station should be set up for teacher help in skills, with child-centered activities requiring no direct teacher assistance planned for the other stations. Four to six stations should be set up, and children should be divided so that an equal number is working at each station. When a child has completed the activity, he moves to another station, first counting to be sure that station is not full. Sixteen activities for the child-centered stations are suggested, with the skills developed by each listed. Thirteen activities, with the skills they develop, for the teacher-directed skill development station are suggested. A sample skill development rating chart that could be kept by the teacher for each child is also provided. (KM)

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KINDERGARTEN STATIONS FOR INTEREST AND SKILL LEARNING

Kindergarten teachers are often seeking ways in which they can meet the individual needs of the children in their groups and still be able to maintain control in their classroom. Many have felt that the only procedure they could follow was to work with the entire group, having all the children do more or less the same activity at the same time. The problem with this plan is that not all children want or need to do the same thing, the result being that some children are always situated in the "fringe areas", breaking away from the group, and not indicating a real interest in what might be taking place with the group. This often creates disturbance and behavior problems. With this in mind, the following technique is proposed as an alternative plan and relates to the idea of learning or interest centers, with an extension of the concept to become more inclusive of the needs of the kindergarten program and curriculum. The plan centers around the concept of the development of Stations for individual interest and also for skill development, including testing which would enable a teacher to fulfill her responsibility in teaching readiness tasks.

In order to use the technique a teacher would need to plan very definitely for the activities to be performed at each station. With a one-teacher situation, only one station should be set up for teacher help in skills. The other stations should be suitable for child-centered activities, requiring no direct teacher assistance. Large labels may be made to put up at each station. These might be numerals, leters, pictures, or various other identification chosen by the teacher. Each station might be identified by a large circle, a square, a triangle, each in a particular color. This would have an appeal for the children, and could be easily constructed by the teacher.

The teacher would plan to have from four to six stations progressing at one time. To begin the station activities, the teacher could divide the children, so that the stations would be quite even as to numbers of children. Some discussion with the

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entire group on acceptable behavior in the stations would be helpful. After the initial assignments to stations, it would be understood that when a child had completed the station activity, he could proceed to another station, after counting to be sure there were only the correct number of children in the station. This would permit freedom of choice, within a degree of structure.

Time allotted for station activities would be decided by the teacher. Experience has proved to the author that one hour is satisfactory, thus giving children time to move from one station to another; however, the teacher should feel free to use a very flexible time schedule, compatible with the group.

During the time that the children were engaged in station activities, the teacher would be working at one skill development station, where children would be learning a particular readiness skill which requires teacher help. The teacher would be working in this station, but would still be able to do over-all supervision of the entire group. As her station completed the skill tasks, a new group would move in, so that during the station time all children would be able to enjoy the individual attention of the teacher. After a skill had been developed so that the children were indicating success, the teacher could then check each child with a simple, short test at the station to determine the degree of achievement. Those children who had mastered the skill would then be able to proceed to a new task.

Following is a chart of child-centered activities which could be used at stations not requiring a teacher's undivided attention. Each activity is accompanied by a list of readiness skills which would be developed by the particular activity. With careful planning, these activities and those for direct teacher assistance could successfully and adequately replace any need for formal work books in preparing a child for first grade experience.

ACTIVITY	SKILL
1. Puzzles	1. a. Skill in matching fitted pieces b. Staying with a task to completion c. Eye-hand co-ordination
2. Lotto Games	2. a. Identification of numerals b. Matching numerals c. Observing differences in numerals d. Matching colors e. Identification of colors
3. Plastic Design Forms	3. a. Matching shapes b. Completing a design c. Awareness of color differences
4. Playhouse Activities	4. a. Learning to make social adjustments b. Relating to home life c. Creative experiences dramatizing life situations
5. Looking at books	5. a. Turning pages correctly b. Studying pictures for clues to stories c. Left to right sequence
6. Playing musical records	6. a. Listening skills b. Sharing in choices of records to be played c. Singing with records in small groups
7. Tracing Activities	7. a. Development of understanding of shapes b. Following the shapes of letters in upper and lower case c. Developing eye-hand co-ordination
8. Matching Activities	8. a. Skill in matching letters b. Developing ability to match shapes c. Finding likenesses in word cards and simple phrases.
9. Various Manipulative Toys	9. a. Creating designs in building b. Matching fitted pieces c. Developing small muscles of hand d. Observing likeness and difference e. Developing eye-hand co-ordination
10. Classifying Objects	10. a. Sorting objects as to those belonging together (Ex. in a store, a house, a zoo) b. Ability to sort pictures into categories (ex. fruits, vegetables, flowers, toys)

ACTIVITY	SKILL
11. Art Activities	11. a. Ability to work alone at a cutting or pasting activity b. Developing independent work habits at the paint easel c. Working in small groups to help one another in creative activities with basic art media
12. Flannel Board Stories	12. a. Using the flannel board figures for simple stories to be placed on the board as the story is told in sequence (Ex. The Three Bears b. Skill in use of flannel board to place matching pictures, numbers, or letters in groups.
13. Use of magnifying glass	13. a. Sorting objects as to size when viewed through the glass b. Noticing differences in objects such as seeds c. Classifying objects on a chart as to Big or Little when viewed through the glass
14. Use of magnets	14. a. Finding which objects are attracted b. Classifying objects which are attracted
15. Use of prisms	15. a. Developing color sense b. Enjoying color c. Trying out various effects of light on the prism
16. Story Sequence on Cards	16. a. Developing stories in picture sequence (Ex. Peter Rabbit) b. Telling the story to other children in the group

Activities more suited to the skill development station where the teacher would be giving individual help would include such activities as are shown in the following chart with skills:

ACTIVITY	SKILL
1. Beginning Writing	1. a. Developing skill in making upper and lower case letters b. Making numerals correctly without reversals c. Developing eye-hand co-ordination d. Using a pencil correctly e. Proceeding from left to right f. Writing their own names
2. Rhyming Activities	2. a. Ability to hear words which rhyme in nursery rhymes and short poems b. Finding words which rhyme in a list of words c. Making up rhyming words d. Listening attentively
3. Beginning Consonants	3. a. Hearing the beginning consonants in a group of words b. Identifying words in a group which begin alike c. Listening skills
4. Categories	4. a. Noting things which belong together b. Classifying objects for booklets of categories
5. Art Activities for readiness skills	5. a. Following directions for directed lessons (Ex. making baskets, booklets, etc.) b. Listening for directions
6. Sizes and Shapes	6. a. Learning the concept of big and little b. Noting the middle-size concept c. Identifying geometric shapes
7. Left to Right	7. a. Progressing from left to right b. Writing name from left to right c. Looking at books from left to right
8. Vocabulary Development	8. a. Finding new words to say b. Naming objects on picture cards c. Knowing what words mean
9. Colors	9. a. Naming the primary colors b. Identifying secondary colors c. Matching colors d. Mixing colors to obtain new ones

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ACTIVITY	SKILLS
10. Co-ordination Activities	10. a. Balancing on a board b. Walking on narrow co-ordination boards c. Tying shoes d. Fastening zippers and buttons e. High jumping on apparatus f. Throwing balls and bean bags into objects g. Skipping with both feet.
11. Left and Right Side	11. a. Following directions such as: Put your right hand on your left knee b. Shaking hands correctly with neighbor
12. Number Activities	12. a. Recognition of ordinal sequence b. Counting objects to 20 c. Knowledge of one-to-one correspondence d. Skill in identifying sets
13. Story Telling and Reading by the Teacher	13. a. Repeating a story in sequence b. Listening skills c. Identifying the main character d. Making up a different story ending

In conclusion, this plan requires careful teacher planning to organize the stations. It is also important to help the children to understand what the stations are for and what their responsibilities are in regard to them. There is a need to vary the activities daily, in order to keep a high interest. Experience in using the plan has shown that the first hour of the school session is the best time for its use, and that other activities in music, games, language development, and stories can be included in the curriculum during the balance of the program.

Following is a Skill Chart which could be made for each child by the teacher on a 5x7 card. If one card was for the end of first semester and the other for the closing of the school year, the progression made by the child would be shown and would be an indication of the ability to accomplish first grade work.

INDIVIDUAL READINESS CARD

CHILD'S NAME _____ DATE _____

SKILL DEVELOPMENT	EXCELLENT	AVERAGE	IMMATURE
1. Likenesses and differences			
2. Categorizing			
3. Matching objects			
4. Recognizing colors			
5. Eye-hand co-ordination			
6. Left to right progression			
7. Listening			
8. Understands sequence			
9. Hears rhyming words			
10. Hears beginning consonants			
11. Follows directions			
12. Understands numbers			
13. Vocabulary development			